

Message Text

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51

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FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1154

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 4480

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: SW DA ETRN BEXP

SUB: SWEDISH PARLIAMENT APPROVES BRIDGE AND PRE-CONSTRUCTION

PLANNING FOR RAILWAY TUNNEL BETWEEN SWEDEN AND DENMARK

REF: COPENHAGEN A-159, 26 JULY 1973

1. SWEDISH RIKSDAG APPROVED BILL DECEMBER 13 CALLING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF SKR 1.2 BILLION (US \$267 MILLION) SIX-LANE TOLL EXPRESSWAY FOR PASSENGER CARS AND BUSES BETWEEN MALMO ON SWEDENS SOUTHWEST COAST AND COPENHAGEN VIA DANISH ISLAND OF SALTHOLM IN ORE SOUND, COST TO BE BORNE WHOLLY BY SWEDEN. EXPRESSWAY WOULD HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH PLANNED INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON SALTHOLM TO BE FINANCED BY DANISH GOVERNMENT AND SCANDINAVIAN AIRLINES SYSTEM (SAS). IN SAME BILL PARLIAMENT ALSO APPROVED PLANNING FOR CONSTRUCTION OF RAILROAD TUNNEL UNDER SOUND BETWEEN HELSINGBORG IN SWEDEN AND HELSINGOR IN DENMARK, SKR 800 MILLION (US \$178 MILLION) COST TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN SWEDEN AND DENMARK. (SOSTS ARE 1971 ESTIMATES.) EXPRESSWAY INTENDED TO BE COMPLETED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT NO LATER THAN 1985, WHEN TUNNEL WILL ALSO BE FINISHED. AS REPORTED REFAIR, SWEDISH AND DANISH GOVERNMENTS HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE LAST JULY TO PROCEED WITH BOTH PROJECTS.

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2. RIKSDAY APPROVED PROJECTS DESPITE OPPOSITION FROM CENTER AND COMMUNIST PARTIES WHICH HAD OBJECTED LARGELY ON GROUNDS THAT INCREASED TRAFFIC WOULD DESPOIL ENVIRONMENT OF SOUTHERN SWEDEN AND THAT NEW STURUP AIRPORT AT MALMO MADE SALTHOLM AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT UNNECESSARY. SWEDISH INDUSTRY, ON OTHER HAND, HAS PRESSED ARGUMENT FOR LAND CONNECTION WITH EC MARKET.

3. WHETHER SAS REMAINS WILLING AND ABLE TO CARRY OUT ITS PART IN CONSTRUCTION OF SALTHOLM AIRPORT APPEARS UNCERTAIN. ACCORDING TO STOCKHOLM PRESS REPORTS DECEMBER 11, SAS DIRECTOR KNUT HAGRUP IS OF OPINION THAT NEITHER HIS AIRLINE NOR DANISH GOVERNMENT CAN AFFORD TO FINANCE AIRPORT AT PRESENT. HE RECOMMENDED SHELIVING ENTIRE FREEWAY-AIRPORT PROJECT INDEFINITELY, CITING TRAFFIC REDUCTIONS FORCED UPON SAS AND GROWING SCARCITY OF AVIATION FUEL AS POSING FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FOR AIRLINE FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

4. DANISH PARLIAMENT MUST NOW APPROVE PROJECTS, A STEP WHICH MAY TAKE SOME TIME GIVEN SAS ATTITUDE, OIL CRISIS AND DANISH POLITICAL SITUATION.
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